

P-404, 421, 405, 407, 430, 426, 520/CP-92-287 ORDER SUSPENDING
CONSIDERATION OF PETITION

BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Don Storm
Tom Burton
Cynthia A. Kitlinski
Dee Knaak
Norma McKanna

Chair
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner

In the Matter of a Petition for
Extended Area Service From the
Enfield Exchange to the
Minneapolis/St. Paul
Metropolitan Calling Area

ISSUE DATE: August 4, 1992

DOCKET NO. P-404, 421, 405, 407,
430, 426, 520/CP-92-287

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PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On April 9, 1992, subscribers in the Enfield exchange filed a petition for extended area service (EAS) to the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan calling area (MCA).

On April 17, 1992, the Minnesota Department of Public Service (the Department) filed its recommendation. The Department noted that Enfield was not currently adjacent to the MCA but was adjacent to the Monticello exchange whose petition for EAS to the MCA is pending. The Department noted that, if Monticello's petition is successful and Monticello joins the MCA, Enfield will be adjacent to the MCA by reason of its adjacency to Monticello. The Department recommended that the Enfield petition be suspended until it is determined whether Monticello will join the MCA.

On April 23, 1992, Bridge Water Telephone Company (Bridge Water) filed a request that Enfield and Monticello subscribers be balloted simultaneously, but notifying the Enfield subscribers that if Monticello subscribers voted against EAS from Monticello to the MCA, Enfield would not be eligible for EAS to the MCA.

On July 21, 1992, the Commission met to consider this matter.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Enfield's lack of adjacency to the petitioned MCA subjects its petition to dismissal for failure to meet a threshold criterion of the EAS statute, Minn. Stat. § 237.161 (1990). However, as in

several previous EAS dockets, the Commission is not inclined to dismiss the petition where the petitioning exchange will meet the adjacency requirement if a pending petition from another exchange is granted. That is the case here. If the Monticello EAS petition is granted and EAS is established between Monticello and the MCA, Enfield, by reason of its shared boundary with Monticello, will be adjacent to the MCA and its petition may proceed.

In the past, the Commission has suspended consideration of the currently non-adjacent exchange pending the outcome of the EAS petition of a related exchange. Bridge Water proposed another way to treat Enfield's non-adjacency problem. Bridge Water requested that the Commission proceed with Enfield and poll Monticello and Enfield subscribers simultaneously. Bridge Water explained that both exchanges historically have paid the same basic local rate and it would like to see that uniformity continue.

The Commission recognizes that adopting the Department's proposal to proceed with the Monticello petition while suspending the Enfield petition pending the Monticello outcome will result in Monticello's subscribers temporarily paying a higher rate (the EAS rate) than Enfield subscribers if Monticello subscribers approve EAS to the MCA. However, if Monticello subscribers disapprove EAS, the difference feared by Bridge Water will not materialize because EAS will not be installed in either exchange. On the other hand, the difference in rates will be unavoidable, despite simultaneous polling, if Monticello subscribers approve EAS and Enfield subscribers disapprove it.

Moreover, it is highly unlikely that EAS rates would be the same for the two exchanges even if they were polled simultaneously and both exchanges approved EAS. EAS rates are based on the costs of installing EAS in the petitioning exchange together with lost toll contribution. The costs of installing EAS and lost toll contribution for Enfield will most likely differ from Monticello's. Simultaneous polling, therefore, would make simultaneous installation of EAS in the exchanges possible (if subscribers in both exchanges approved EAS) but would not assure what Bridge Water seeks, that EAS rates would be the same in both exchanges.

In these circumstances, the potential for confusion among Enfield subscribers regarding the contingency of their vote far outweighs the highly contingent and, at best, short term benefit of simultaneous polling in the two exchanges. Accordingly, the Commission will simply suspend consideration of the Enfield EAS petition pending the outcome of the Monticello petition.

ORDER

1. Pending the outcome of the Monticello EAS petition in Docket No. P-404, 421, 430, 407, 405, 426/CP-89-1039, consideration of the petition of subscribers in the Enfield exchange for extended area service (EAS) to the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan Calling Area is hereby suspended.
2. This Order shall become effective immediately.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Richard R. Lancaster
Executive Secretary

(S E A L)